Discover how to have a close, loving, vibrant family!

Forever a Family

Spring 2011 - Volume 3, Issue 1

A Balancing Act
A Life Lived

Parents & Prodigals
Dear Reader,

If there is one thing that never seems to change, it is the fact that life is full of changes. We are experiencing one of those changes now in our Forever a Family staff. Rachel Krum, the young lady who has so beautifully designed the magazine layout for the last two years, is “retiring” to pursue further education and participate in short-term mission service overseas. We will miss her joy, enthusiasm, and talent. May God bless you, Rachel, as you follow His plan for your life.

A few months ago, a gentleman named Robert Mason came to us and offered his services as a graphic designer if we should ever need them. Little did he know that we were facing transition in the near future. How thankful we are that God saw our need and Robert offered to meet it! Robert has many years of experience in this field and currently runs his own graphic design company, Mason Design. Thank you, Robert. We appreciate your willingness to fill this important position.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all who support FAF Magazine. While we do not require

Our family has been enjoying your magazine for ever a year now. Our daughter likes the Children’s Corner activities. Thank you for your honesty, candid sharing, and the guidance you offer to families like ours.

Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to put together such a nice magazine. There is a great variety of relationship articles for the whole family. The layout and graphics are attractive and we’ve found it to be a helpful witnessing tool in sharing with others. Keep up the good work!

Maine

California

Thank you for your efforts!
Sue lives in Tennessee where she works for a lithography firm.

B
illy was twelve years old when my husband, his father, chose to end his life. Our lives were thrown into chaos. While Billy was still outgoing and popular, he had post-traumatic stress disorder which resulted in short-term memory loss. This caused his grades to plummet. The worst was yet to come. Billy started to experiment with marijuana.

After graduating from high school and failing his first semester of college, Billy spent most of his time lying around doing nothing or getting high while I was at work. After twice discovering pot in his room, I warned Billy that the next time would be the last time and that he would have to leave.

My husband and I had established our home as a Christian home with Christian principles practiced. To allow this behavior to continue would dishonor God and harm Billy in the long run. I again found pot in his room and asked him to move out. This decision tore me apart. He was my only child. As I cried and prayed, a strong impression came from God, “Do it. Give Billy to me.” I followed the Lord’s command.

I did give Billy some start-up money, but warned him it would not last long. He would need to find a job, an apartment, and a roommate. I gave him two months to move out and avoided him as much as possible the next few days so as not to give in to emotion. He knew I was serious.

In the middle of a crisis at work, Billy called me and thanked me for “throwing him out” (his words). He told me that he was excited and that I should have done this a year ago. I had to sit down. It had only been two weeks since my ultimatum; and he had found a roommate, a job, and an apartment.

Now, two years later, Billy has received a promotion at work, is paying his own way through college, and has started bringing his friends to my church. He has even started tithing and told me it makes him “feel different.”

God used tough love on both of us to bring positive change. I learned to trust completely and Billy learned to be a responsible, drug-free man. Praise God!

From as far back as I can remember, I have had a dream. You know, a nice big farmhouse, with apple pies cooling on the window sill, homemade bread and a dozen kids keeping things lively. It was my “American Dream.”

I clung tenaciously to that dream; though reality for me has been quite different. For the last thirty-seven years, I have not lived in the same place longer than three years.

My husband and I have been missionaries in Papua New Guinea for five years now and have been following the same pattern. Moving after our first three years, I came to the ecstatic conclusion that the day had finally come for my dream to be realized. With the house we currently call home being swiftly devoured by termites, we would have to build our own home, but God had something else to say…wait.

“Wait?” I thought, “What do you mean wait? We need a house to live in!” It would take a year of arguing with God before I was ready to “hear” what He had probably longed for years to tell me. In a gentle way, He quietly spoke, “Your dream is an idol.”

After many days of weeping, soul searching, and reflection, I had to agree with Him and confess. I had let a “home of my own” usurp God’s position of being my stability and security.

Some of us will not have houses and lands here, but like Abraham, God says to us, “There is a land of promise,” Hebrews 11:8-10, and like Sarah, we will take hold of that promise and the hands of our husbands and make “His footsteps our pathway,” (Psalm 85:13 NKJV) maybe not fully realizing that “it is given to you in the behalf of Christ not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake.” Philippians 1:29.

Today, I find myself at the crossroad of recommitment to my God and to my husband and have made a decision. I will be content with such things as I have, and will build…on the Rock.

Cindy and her husband, David, live and work among the Gogodala people in Balimo, Western Province, Papua New Guinea.
"How do you do it?" many friends would ask after learning I was a single, stay at home mom who home schooled.

Tania is a wife again and lives in North Carolina where she continues to enjoy homeschooling.

The Budgetarian

Instead of buying prepackaged cereals, beans are another inexpensive food and offer a wide variety. Buying food in season also cuts cost. Start making your own bread and make milk using nuts and seeds.

Household cleaners and detergents are pricey and unhealthy, too. Try using baking soda as an all-purpose cleaner. Simplify and declutter your household regularly, and sell items on consignment. I used the money made from consignment to pay for the girls’ music classes, clothes, gas, and school curriculum. Take advantage of sales on items you would normally buy. Check the thrift stores first and learn their special pricing days.

No cost entertainment activities could include family time, church and community work projects, and home school support groups.

Proverbs 13:7 says, “There is that maketh himself rich yet hath nothing. There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.” Feeling rich does not mean having your pocket full of money. I had luxuries that money couldn’t buy, including time with my girls.

God has promised in Malachi to pour out blessings on those who return to Him that which is due Him. I paid tithe on my child support; and though life was not always easy, the Lord blessed. Through prayer and study, God gave me the wisdom to stretch our finances as far as possible. Pray for discipline and self-control. By His grace, that’s what helped me.

After a divorce in 2002, my three girls and I moved from Miami, Florida to a small town in Tennessee. I was now living on child support. I have not always made the wisest financial decisions and quickly found myself in a position where I had to become creative in handling my finances.

My priority was to be able to stay home with the girls. Life became much simpler; however, living a simple life did not mean we didn’t have a fulfilled life. I learned to examine all areas of our finances and to make better choices.

Good nutrition is an essential need so I found ways to cut on cost but not compromise health. Grains go a long way, especially if you buy in bulk and use a co-op when possible. Cook grain in a crock pot instead of buying prepackaged cereals. Beans are another inexpensive food and offer a wide variety. Buying food in season also cuts cost. Start making your own bread and make milk using nuts and seeds.

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Showing Kindness

His name was Joe. He was standing directly ahead of us in the security line at the airport showing ID when the TSA agent said, “Your passport ID doesn’t match your boarding pass.” He looked bewildered. “Do you have a valid driver’s license?” Joe fumbled to take out his billfold and produce the license. “You’re okay. Your license matches your boarding pass.” Joe continued on through security taking off his coat, shoes, watch, and belt before being funneled through the scanner to reclaim his things on the other side. It took him time to get himself and his belongings back in order.

As we entered the elevator, we saw Joe walking toward us. “Would you like us to hold the elevator?” we asked. “I don’t know where to go,” he replied. We soon discovered he was on our same flight and offered to take him to the gate. He was relieved. That was the beginning of a bond of friendship. We asked if he would like to sit with us and assured him that we would let him know when it was time to board. His anxiety subsided, and he began to share snippets of his life of ninety-three years.

We helped Joe find his seat on the flight and reassured him that we would see him to his gate at the next airport. Upon arriving, he was given a wheel chair with a transport agent to take him to his next flight but we went along as promised. Joe was so grateful.

The agent asked me if we were family. I said “No, we’re neighbors. We both live in Montana.” Joe smiled and echoed, “We’re neighbors.”

There are many people in our world who are alone. They may not be going through unusual circumstances as was Joe, but they need a neighbor who will smile and walk by their side.

A kind word spoken, a thoughtful act of service, or a smile – these are all simple ways to express kindness that is not only a blessing to the receiver but also to ourselves. Our lives will be enriched as we seek to ease another’s burden or to bring a little sunshine into their lives.

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” Matthew 7:12.

Tania is a wife again and lives in North Carolina where she continues to enjoy homeschooling.

Alane is a co-founder of Restoration International and lives in Montana with her husband, Tom.
Monday, October 3, 2009. It’s been one week and two days. The most anxious, terrifying, scary, and faith-building week of my life.

It was around 2:00 A.M. on a Friday that I heard a commotion coming from upstairs. Before I had a chance to get out of bed, my little brother was banging on my door yelling for me to come quickly because something was wrong with dad. My mom came out of the bathroom where my father had been vomiting up blood and said we needed to get him to the hospital. By the expression on her face I knew it was serious.

As we helped my father on the stairs he had to sit down after about three steps, too weak to continue. Was this really happening? Was I living a normal life just ten minutes before? Is my father going to die on the steps? My mom yelled to call 911. While I was running to the ER and my mother got down on her knees and prayed for my father’s life. I prayed that God would honor her prayer.

When we heard screaming and yelling from the back, we ran to the emergency room doors; but no one came out. I didn’t know what was going on; but my heart was in my throat. I can’t explain the feeling. My mom came out and said dad had thrown up again; but he was still conscious. After awhile, I could only pray that God would take what was in my heart and accept it as a prayer because I had no more words.

Since that last journal entry my life has changed completely. I had originally started writing about what happened because I wanted to let my friends know what was going on and to continue to ask for prayer. But the very night I was writing that entry the doctor came to talk to my family and said that there was nothing else they could do for my father, that he had a zero prognosis and that his life was being sustained only by medications and the ventilators. After that, I didn’t feel I had the strength to continue writing this story, knowing what the outcome would be, knowing that I would actually be telling the story of how my father died.

When I prayed, I could go on and on about why my dad’s life should be spared – to be there with my mom, to be there for his children, to continue guiding and being a father to us, to minister to people at church, to be a mighty vessel to win souls for Christ. I honestly couldn’t see one good thing coming from his death. So I prayed, “Therefore I say unto you, WHATSOEVER THINGS YOU DESIRE, WHEN YOU PRAY BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE THEM AND YE SHALL HAVE THEM” Mark 11:24.

I prayed, “God, you know what I desire. I believe it. Please grant it.” God had other plans, but the wonderful thing is that God’s plan is perfect. He can’t make a mistake. He doesn’t mess up and nothing happens unless Divine love permits it.

One month ago to the day my dad, the best man I ever knew and probably ever will know, passed away. Even though it has “only” been a month, this month without him seems longer then the twenty-two years I had with him.

Since my fathers passing, heaven has become so much more real to me. It’s where I long to be. Earth has nothing to offer me. It’s full of sadness, heartache, death, and disappointment. Even the things that are beautiful or bring happiness are marred by sin.

While we were in the hospital those ten days, I saw each person that was in the critical care unit had a family that was being affected by their illness. The anxiety, fear, and uncertainty that we were experiencing was their companion as well. I learned that I should pray for others with the same earnestness that I wanted people to pray for my dad.

Every night I pray for my friends and family because I want them to be in heaven. I want other people who have experienced loss to feel the joy of reunion with their loved ones, or the feeling of peace that comes with no longer dealing with the struggles of life. When we get to heaven, and walk beside the crystal sea with ever flowing streams and Jesus is by our side, all that perplexed us here on earth He is going to make plain. When we wonder about the dark providences that we went through on earth, Jesus will tell us that it was to perfect our character. When we recall the times that our finite minds saw only confusion and broken promises, He is going to show us the most beautiful and perfect harmony; and so right now, although I can’t understand God’s plan, I know God is tenderly and continually working for our good. And with that thought, I am comforted.
Celeste enjoys being a homemaker in The Netherlands where she lives with her husband, Wilco, and their three children.

Have you ever had disagreements with your spouse? Have you ever exchanged negative words with your spouse, hurting one another, all the while coming no closer to resolving your differences? Have you ever had a hard time admitting you were wrong after entering into an argument? My husband and I have.

We had been married for one year, and these problems were coming up from time to time. We really didn’t want this kind of communication and began looking for a solution. In spite of our efforts, the same problem continued to come up. We would pray about it; but in the midst of a disagreement, the prayer we had sent up in the morning didn’t seem to have a positive effect.

It was not until we heard someone give a lecture on finding peace with God that our eyes were opened. We had the answers at hand, and they helped!

The solution can be summarized in three steps: 1) Pray first thing in the morning, and don’t forget to pray whenever you feel tempted to lapse into old habits. We need to be connected to God continually; and through prayer, we can maintain that connection. If you ask, God will help you to be willing to submit to Him and act as He would. 2) If you find yourself in the middle of a disagreement or have already said things to hurt one another, resist the blame game. No one can make us angry or agitated. That it is a choice we make for ourselves. 3) Be willing to see your own fault or role in a disagreement and be willing to say I’m sorry.

After learning these principles, my husband and I submitted ourselves to God when the next disagreement arose; and ever since, we have experienced a little bit of heaven on earth in our home. Two different personalities do not have to agree on everything, but it doesn’t mean a quarrel is inevitable. We have grown closer to God and to each other by implementing these simple steps. After nearly sixteen years of marriage, we still don’t agree on everything, but have learned to handle disagreements the best way – Heaven’s way.

We live in the country and have family morning and evening worships together along with family time before worship. As a hospital CEO, I thought I was doing a good job of balancing my time with my family; but this incident helped me see my wife and children need me more than I had thought. As the priest of the home, this revelation is making me rethink my role as a husband, father, and CEO. I have read that “Shepherds who fail at home will fail at church.” In other words, if the hospital is my church and I want to be successful, then I must first be a good shepherd to my family. This is backward thinking for many CEOs who put their work and career first while their wives and children get the leftovers.

If I ever leave or lose my job, what will people remember most about my tenure? Will they think I the best CEO the hospital ever had, but I was a lousy father who hardly ever spent time with his wife and children? Or will they say I was just an average CEO, but I sure loved my family and was a wonderful husband and father to my children?

I want my children to know their father and to be able to say that these were the best years of our life because Daddy invested time and energy into modeling the image of Christ to us.
I
come from a very warm and united family of seven children of which I am the young-
est. My mother was a very humble woman who was filled with the Holy Spirit and
who left us the legacy of serving others. Because of her example, my brothers and
sisters and I became participants of a higher calling: to look after each other and others
that were not part of our immediate family.

My mother taught us a number of les-
sions that have become guiding principles
in keeping our family united despite our
differences and the fact that we are all mar-
rried now with families of our own to care
for.

One of the many examples she left us
was how she made the effort to stay in
touch with her brothers and sisters by vis-
iting, calling, and sharing with them even
though they did not have the same Chris-
tian beliefs as she did. She continually used
her beliefs as a witness of Christ’s love. In
doing so, she gained the respect of her im-
mediate family and laid the foundation of
how her children should interact and love
their own families as well as non-believers.

My mother’s unwavering faith in her
Christian beliefs made a deep impression
on all of her children. Not only do we
look after each other physically, but we
also keep in touch by sharing Bible vers-
es, praying for each other, and discussing
Bible studies or topics about salvation and
witnessing. Our family gatherings always
include family worships.

My mother began a church plant in
our home town, and her dream was to see
a church there. We have helped to facilitate
this dream by supporting a Bible worker in
that area, and plans have begun to build a
church there in our Mother’s honor.

Finally, the most important lesson
left by my mother was that we all need
self-respect. No matter how badly we are
treated, we have the ability to forgive and
show love and acceptance. Best of all, we
can give back something nice in return as
was Christ’s example. My mother taught
my siblings and me that we should always
ask for forgiveness and should never let
our differences separate us. We praise God
for our mother’s legacy!

A Mother’s
Legacy
Lives On

Imelda writes from California where
she lives with her husband and home-
schools their two children.

W
hen I was a little girl, we were building our home and as a result we didn’t have
much money for gifts. When Mummy’s birthday came around, Daddy and I
tried to think of a special gift that would not cost any money. We had to think
really hard! We decided to give “ourselves”. We made life-size pictures of ourselves and
gave them to Mummy for the day, with the promise to do whatever she wanted us to do.
We had such fun making and delivering our gift. That day is an extra special memory
for us all, and I think that my Mummy liked that kind of gift better than if we had spent lots
of money!

ACTIVITY

Pray and ask God
whom He would
have you serve with
your whole heart
for the day. Then
ask someone to trace
around you on a really big
piece of brown paper. Cut “yourself”
out and decorate with a smile so it looks
just like you! In your best penmanship
write your name and the date of your gift.

Then give “yourself” to
the one you have chosen
to serve and remember to
do all they ask with your
whole heart, because when
you do you are really giving
to God.

Emily is sixteen and lives with her parents
and three younger sisters in Australia.
New Releases

In their new book *For Better or for . . . Best!* Tom and Alane explore the painful pitfalls that married couples encounter and offer practical Biblical solutions that work. Whether you have a vibrant marriage or are headed for disaster, these principles in cooperation with Christ will make your marriage the best it can be. *For Better or for . . . Best!* was written as a sharing book and is being offered at affordable quantity pricing.

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In *The Connected Family*, Paul and Carolyn Rayne present a practical twenty-six step program designed to help parents make their children a priority, lead them to make a commitment to God, and teach them the tools for Christian living. Each chapter in this book contains a Step Forward section and a Journal Question and Answer section, and is intended to bring tangible, rewarding results for both parent and child. *The Connected Family* is not just a book you read; it’s a book you do!

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To place an order, visit our website at [www.restoration-international.org](http://www.restoration-international.org) or call toll free 1-888-446-8844. Office hours are Mon–Thur from 9:00–5:00 MST - Closed Fri-Sun.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar. 18-20, Cluj, Romania
Contact: Horst Müller
Phone: 011-(49)-178-4935-636
Email: drmuellerh@aol.com

Mar. 25-27, Alexandria, Romania
Contact: Horst Müller
Phone: 011-(49)-178-4935-636
Email: drmuellerh@aol.com

April 6-10, Oklahoma
Family Campmeeting
Hosts: Mike & Connie Opoka
(417) 683-6740  ok@fcmhost.info

May 4-8, United Kingdom
Family Campmeeting
Hosts: Jack & Joy Rayne
(01550) 740-353  uk@fcmhost.info

May 18-22, New Jersey
Family Campmeeting
Host: David Pritchard
(570) 595-9321  nj@fcmhost.info

June 1-5, Washington
Family Campmeeting
Hosts: Ed & Jean Schlittenhart
(509) 292-0836  wa@fcmhost.info

June 29-July 3, CALIFORNIA
Hosts: Santoyo Family
(714) 360-3406  ca@fcmhost.info

August 31-Sept. 4, COLORADO
Hosts: Bill & Kelly Plank
(303) 593-2899  wdplank@earthlink.net

September 14-18, VIRGINIA
Hosts: Lee & Lynelle Perschino
804-375-3485  va@fcmhost.info

October 5-9, INDIANA
Hosts: Doug & Cyndi Leffler
(217) 322-6184  in@fcmhost.info
The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. Isaiah 40:8